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ANGOLA

We cannot confirm recent press reports that Soviet military advisers have been captured in the fighting in Angola, but the Soviets clearly are becoming more involved in the civil war in the former Portuguese colony.

In a news release from Lusaka, Zambia, on November 21, the National Union claimed it had captured some Soviets, Cubans, Mozambicans, a Congolese, and a Brazilian mercenary. The captured foreigners were said to have been supporting Popular Movement forces defending the key northern resupply city of Malanje. National Front and National Union forces were reported to have taken the city from the Popular Movement last week, despite the latter's recent assertion that it retains control there.

Approximately 100 Soviet military advisers were believed to be assisting Popular Movement forces in the Luanda area at the time of independence on November 11. Their role probably included training Popular Movement troops in the use of modern weapons, giving advice on tactics and strategy against rival groups, and supervising the delivery, assembly, and maintenance of the large amount of Soviet weapons received just before independence.

Another group of Soviet technicians in Brazzaville and Point Noire, Congo, is probably servicing weapons bound for Popular Movement forces in Angola. This advisory group may now total 200.

Should the Popular Movement already have, or soon possess, MIG aircraft, the number of Soviet military personnel in Angola may rise to between 400 and 500. The Movement now has an inventory of Soviet equipment that includes unknown numbers of armored cars, armored personnel carriers, tanks, multiple rocket launchers, light field artillery, heavy mortars, and SA-7 defensive missiles. In addition, some 3,000 Cubans are assisting the Popular Movement.

Losses by the Popular Movement to its rivals during the past month underscore the necessity for urgent resupply of Soviet equipment. The active communist presence and involvement in Angola are likely to accelerate as Moscow and Havana seek to secure for the Popular Movement a controlling voice in the future of the former Portuguese territory. (SECRET-NOFORN)

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